



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2011**

**Grade 7
Reading**

Reading

❶ A **synonym** for the word scarcity is

- A. tension.
- B. boredom.
- C. fright.
- D. shortage.

Jack's motive for arriving early was to get the best parking place.

❷ What does the word motive mean as it is used in the box?

- A. reason
- B. estimate
- C. hesitation
- D. opportunity

This passage begins as the narrator, Meg, watches her sister in disbelief. Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Molly and Me

Lois Lowry

It was Molly who drew the line.

2 She did it with chalk—a fat piece of white chalk left over from when we lived in town, had sidewalks, and used to play hopscotch, back when we both were younger. That piece of chalk had been around for a long time. She fished it out of a little clay dish that I had made in last year’s pottery class, where it was lying with a piece of string and a few paper clips and a battery that we weren’t quite sure was dead.

She took the chalk and drew a line right on the rug. Good thing it wasn’t a fuzzy rug or it never would have worked; but it was an old, worn, leftover rug from the dining room of our other house: very flat, and the chalk made a perfect white line across the blue—and then, while I watched in amazement (because it was unlike Molly, to be so angry), she kept right on drawing the line up the wall, across the wallpaper with its blue flowers. She stood on her desk and drew the line up to the ceiling, and then she went back to the other side of the room and stood on her bed and drew the line right up to the ceiling on that wall, too. Very neatly. Good thing it was Molly who drew it; if I had tried, it would have been a mess, a wavy line and off center. But Molly is very neat.

Then she put the chalk back in the dish, sat down on her bed, and picked up her book. But before she started to read again, she looked over at me (I was still standing there amazed, not believing that she had drawn the line at all) and said, “There. Now be as much of a slob as you want, only keep your mess on your side. *This side is mine.*”

When we lived in town we had our own rooms, Molly and I. It didn’t really make us better friends, but it gave us a chance to ignore each other more.

Funny thing about sisters. Well, about us, anyway; Dad says it’s unacademic to generalize. Molly is prettier than I am, but I’m smarter than Molly. I want with my whole being to *be* something someday; I like to think that someday, when I’m grown up, people everywhere will know who I am, because I will have accomplished something important—I don’t even know for sure yet what I want it to be, just that it will be something that makes people say my name, Meg Chalmers, with respect. When I told Molly that once, she said that what *she* wants is to have a different name when she grows up, to be Molly Something Else, to be Mrs. Somebody, and to have her children, lots of them, call her “Mother,” with respect, and that’s all she cares about. She’s content, waiting for that; I’m restless, and so impatient. She’s sure, absolutely sure, that what she’s waiting for will happen, just the way she wants it to; and I’m so uncertain, so fearful my dreams will end up forgotten somewhere, someday, like a piece of string and a paper clip lying in a dish.

Being both determined and unsure at the same time is what makes me the way I am, I think: hasty, impetuous, sometimes angry over nothing, often miserable about everything. Being so well sorted out in her own goals, and so assured of everything happening the way she wants and expects it to, is what makes Molly the way she is: calm, easygoing, self-confident, downright smug.

3 In paragraph 2, the word fished means

- A. sneaked.
- B. plucked.
- C. stretched.
- D. loosened.

4 Why does Molly draw the chalk line?

- A. to identify her own space
- B. to show how neatly she can draw
- C. to remind Meg of a childhood game
- D. to challenge Meg to draw her own line

5 What is true about both sisters' dreams for the future?

- A. Both want to raise a family.
- B. Both want to be respected.
- C. Both want to be famous.
- D. Both want to have new names.

6 Meg's statement that she wants "to *be* something someday" shows **mainly** that she is

- A. funny.
- B. honest.
- C. talented.
- D. ambitious.

7 Explain how the two sisters are different. Use details from the passage to support your answer.

The discovery of pits filled with hundreds of terra-cotta soldiers near the tomb of China's first emperor was one of the most amazing archaeological finds ever made. Read this passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

A Silent Army

Jacqueline Ball and Richard Levey

1 **I**t was 1974. In Xi'an (pronounced shee-an), 580 miles (930 km) southwest of Beijing, some farmers were digging a well. Reaching a level 15 feet (4.6 m) below ground, they uncovered a fragment of pottery that looked like the head of a very large sculpture of a man. The farmers could tell right away that this pottery was more important than finishing the well. They told a local official, who called in archaeologists right away. Working like crime scene investigators, the archaeologists carefully excavated the area around the farmers' well. They found many statues of soldiers made of a red clay called *terra-cotta*. They also found clay horses and chariots. It was as if a whole army lay beneath the earth. The site is only a mile from the main tomb of the First Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huangdi, who lived from 259 B.C. to 210 B.C. They knew this massive group of sculptures must be part of his tomb complex.

Over the next six years, the investigators detected three underground pits covering more than 200,000 square feet (22,000 meters sq.)—larger than the Louisiana Superdome. Ranged over this huge space were about 8,000 terra-cotta warriors and horses buried in tunnels or rooms that were separated by walls made of rammed earth. Some figures stood tall; others kneeled. Horses galloped or waited in harnesses.

How They Were Made

Each sculpture was life-size. Actually, the soldiers were even bigger than life. They stood about six feet (1.8 m) tall, which was taller than most Chinese people were at the time they were

made. This would have made them seem especially strong and powerful. Each figure's face had a different expression, hairstyle, and clothing. Each one was marked with his army rank.

From studying the way the warriors were made, archaeologists concluded that Qin craftsmen had an extremely high level of technical skill. The various parts of the sculptures—legs, arms, bodies, fronts of heads, and backs of heads—were made in separate molds. Then each warrior was glued together.

5 Over the molded parts, craftsmen attached individually sculpted ears, noses, hair, and facial expressions, as well as military armor, belts, and other precise costume details. They then fired the completed sculpture in a pottery kiln and painted the finished product. As a result of such careful attention to detail, no two warriors, or horses, are exactly the same.

It appears that the craftsmen who made the sculptures were proud of their work. The name of the person who built each figure was found inscribed on the warrior's robe, leg, or armor.



This life-size archer once held a real crossbow in his hands. Some experts consider him to be the best crafted of all the terra-cotta soldiers.

- 8 How were the statues discovered?
- A. Local authorities found pieces of pottery.
 - B. Historians followed clues to find them.
 - C. Farmers uncovered them accidentally.
 - D. Archaeologists were studying Emperor Qin's tomb.
- 9 In the first paragraph, the phrase "like crime scene investigators" suggests the archaeologists
- A. looked for evidence of illegal activity.
 - B. uncovered objects very carefully.
 - C. were watched closely as they worked.
 - D. searched for clues, not actual objects.
- 10 In paragraph 5, what does the word precise mean?
- A. exact
 - B. faded
 - C. lovely
 - D. simple
- 11 Which sentence from the passage contains an **opinion**?
- A. "Reaching a level 15 feet (4.6 m) below ground, they uncovered a fragment of pottery that looked like the head of a very large sculpture of a man."
 - B. "They found many statues of soldiers made of a red clay called *terra-cotta*."
 - C. "This would have made them seem especially strong and powerful."
 - D. "The name of the person who built each figure was found inscribed on the warrior's robe, leg, or armor."
- 12 Explain why the "Silent Army" is considered to be "one of the most amazing archaeological finds ever made." Use details from the passage to support your answer.

Acknowledgments

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